

Listening Session
Indiana Governor's Conference
December 7, 2004

Good Afternoon. My name is Dr. Alejandro Aparicio, and I am a member of the 2005 White House Conference on Aging Policy Committee. I am delighted to be here today and I bring you greetings from the Chairman of the Committee, the Honorable Dorcas R. Hardy.

I am pleased to be joined by my colleague Robert Blancato, a valued member of the Policy Committee and former Executive Director of the 1995 White House Conference on Aging.

We are so thrilled to be part of the 49th Annual Indiana Governor's Conference on Aging, and I commend Sherry Gray, Director, Bureau of Aging and In Home Services and her staff for the work they have done to put this session together. And congratulations on having the entire Conference designated as an Official White House Conference on Aging event.

Today's White House Conference on Aging listening session is the first in the Midwest.

Midwestern states like Indiana have a unique perspective on the aging of our nation, including from a rural perspective. It is critical that we hear from you as we plan for the historic first White House Conference on Aging of the 21st Century (October 23-26, 2005).

Nearly ten years passed since the last White House Conference on Aging. As you look at the 45 final recommendations from that conference, it is important to note that none of them have become obsolete. This does not, of course, mean that nothing has changed. Certainly there have been a lot of new, substantive and innovative solutions offered to try to improve the economic and social well being of senior citizens. And many of the old problems have taken different shapes.

We are also coming upon the senior age of the celebrated baby boom generation - those born between 1946 and 1964. This White House Conference on Aging will be paying a great deal of attention to that group of new/rising seniors and to any special considerations they bring with them....aside from their sheer volume of 78 million.

At the same time, the WHCoA of 2005 is directed to address the needs and issues associated with those who are already part of the elderly population.

The White House Conference on Aging Policy Committee wants to hear from you about what you believe will be the most important aging and boomer issues requiring national attention over the next years – through 2015. Today's listening session is part of a comprehensive outreach plan to gather as much input from the public as possible.

We have held 7 listening sessions thus far and by Friday that number will have increased to ten. (3 this week). We have 12 Solutions Forums planned starting in early 2005, and we have been pleased to designate more than 40 events so far as Official White House Conference on Aging events like today's.

When totaled, the number of individuals who have participated in or plan to participate in pre-WHCoA events that we know of just today is about 12,000! I expect that number to only increase as we get closer to the Conference date next October.

We intend to use what we hear today at this session and at all pre-Conference events to help further refine the broad agenda that the Policy Committee adopted as a starting point on October 1.

We will then work to turn the issues raised and the solutions presented into suggested recommendations that will be presented for pre-Conference delegate consideration and at the Conference sessions. In order to most effectively accomplish the Conference's objectives, the number of final recommendations will be limited to 50.

We expect presenters at listening sessions to talk to us about current issues that affect older persons; however, we ask you to really focus on the future and try to envision the challenges of the next ten years and beyond - and that you tell us how you believe those challenges can best be met. We welcome innovative thinking -- and we know Indiana has many creative people who can help us in our work.

The broad areas of the Conference are:

- Planning Along the Lifespan
- The Workplace
- Our Community
- Health and Long Term Living
- Social Engagement
- The Marketplace

We know that Hoosiers will bring a unique perspective to the preparation for the Conference next year and we want to hear about issues that are specific to your state.

Most of all, we want what comes out of the 2005 White House Conference on Aging to go **from the White House to your house** and the homes of all who have stake in the aging of America. We can only do that with your help.

The theme for the 2005 White House Conference on Aging is "The Booming Dynamics of Aging: From Awareness to Action."

This theme reflects the action-oriented mission of this historic White House Conference and the conversation we want to have – **that we need to have** -- with the American people about our future.

Help us shape that conversation so that together we can move forward to address the aging issues of today and tomorrow. Thank you.

I'd like to introduce our first panelists and ask that their presentations be kept brief (no more than 3-5 minutes) and may be followed by questions from the Committee. Please know that all statements will be posted on the WHCoA website (<http://www.whcoa.gov>) as soon as possible after today's session.

Thank you. Our first panelists are: